

Testimony of Elizabeth Beisel, R.D.N. LLC

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In support of HB 6798 – An act requiring labeling of baby food and infant formula containing genetically engineered organisms.

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban & Members of the Committee on Children:
My name is Beth Beisel, and this is the fourth legislative session that I have come to testify in support of a GMO labeling bill, as a representative of GMO Free CT, a grassroots campaign that led CT to become the first state in the country to pass a GMO labeling law. This particular bill resonates with me because I am a mother, but as a nutrition professional, I know that **Infants and children are especially vulnerable to GMOs and the pesticides they contain.**

Since 1996, when genetically modified foods were introduced into the food supply without our knowledge or consent, an entire generation has evolved.

Today's children are the first to be raised on food that is started in the laboratory of a chemical company, and grown in a field where water, soil, sediment, air, and the very crops that go into most processed foods are contaminated with chemicals. These processed foods include infant formula, and baby food.

Most adults do not remember classmates having allergies to food, yet today there is barely a classroom in America that doesn't have at least one student with a food allergy, often a severe or potentially fatal food allergy.

According to the CDC, food allergies among children increased by 18% between 1997 and 2007. **(Keep in mind that GMOs were first allowed on the market in 1996.)** In addition, a study released by the CDC in 2013 claimed that food allergies among children increased by approximately 50% between 1997 and 2011.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db121.htm>

Treating food allergies costs \$25 billion per year in the US alone! (Gupta R, et al. The high economic burden of childhood food allergy in the United States. Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol, 2012; 109: A1-A162.)

Evidence is anecdotal – we can't prove that GMOs and their pesticides are the cause of food allergies, but once we have labeling, we will have a better shot at proving it.

Children are most vulnerable to GMOs and the pesticides they are contaminated with because their macro and micro nutrient needs are higher during infancy and childhood than at any other stage of development. During growth, rapid cell division requires much higher amounts of protein, calories, and nutrients. The average adult requires 25-30 grams per kilogram of body weight; a baby (1-3 years old) requires more than three times

as much, and an infant requires four times as many calories per kilogram of body weight as an adult! This means that infants and children are consuming at least 1/3 –1/2 as many gmos and glyphosate as adults, in much smaller, developing bodies.

A multitude of health problems have been linked to glyphosate and/or Roundup. 1) <http://earthopensource.org/projects/gmo-pesticide-health-research/> 2) The Myths of Safe Pesticides. By Andre Leu, president of the International Federation of Agriculture Movements, 2014.

Infant formula is a chemically developed substance made primarily from derivatives of genetically engineered corn, and soy. This means that the first food many infants ingest comes from a plant that has its own pesticide number. Every kernel of genetically engineered corn is made to express a deadly toxin, which causes a rootworm's stomach to explode. Each type of genetically engineered corn is registered with the EPA. Soy and sugar beets are genetically engineered to withstand the application of unprecedented levels of herbicides like Roundup which contains glyphosate and is genotoxic. (A toxic agent that **damages** DNA molecules in genes, causing mutations, tumors, etc.)

(Newer versions of these crops contain both Bt toxin, AND tolerate herbicide application.) Studies show that glyphosate, when combined with “inert” ingredients, like those used in formulating Roundup, becomes up to one thousand times more potent than glyphosate alone. "**Major pesticides are more toxic to human cells than their declared active principles**," *Biomedical Research International*.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3955666/>

Infants do not have a fully developed immune system, nor is their blood brain barrier established. In Canada, BT toxin – used in GE corn, was found in the blood of pregnant women and in their unborn babies

Peer reviewed medical literature demonstrates that animals exposed to genetically engineered foods develop smaller livers and brains, as well as infertility and cancerous tumors. The biotechnology industry claims that these foods are safe – but our government has NEVER proven them safe. Human safety testing has never been conducted. In fact, science is not part of the FDA approval process. Any ‘test’ summaries provided to the FDA are voluntary. The FDA's 1992 GE safety policy stands today, “***Ultimately, it is the food producer who is responsible for assuring safety.***”¹ Yet Monsanto contends, “***Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring its safety is the FDA's job.***”² - FDA Statement of Policy: Foods Derived from New Plant Varieties (GMO Policy) Federal Register, Volume 57, Page 129, 1992 ² - Phillip Angell, Monsanto's Director of Corporate Communications, New York Times Magazine, October 25, 1998

Despite what you will hear from the opposition today, no scientific consensus on GMO safety exists.

1) <http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/>

2) <http://www.gmofreeusa.org/research/gmo-safety/>

I strongly urge you to pass this bill and put babies before corporate profits.

Thank you!